



## COMMITTEE STATEMENT

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**Opening Statement of Rep. Russ Fulcher (R-ID), Republican Leader  
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Human Services Hearing:  
"Examining Ways to Improve the Juvenile Justice System and Support America's Young People"  
May 17, 2022**

(As prepared for delivery)

*"Promoting safe communities for America's children is a national priority. Every child should have the space to grow into becoming a productive member of society. That's why federal policies have long supported state and local efforts to set at-risk youth and juvenile offenders on the pathway to success."*

*"Parents, teachers, and community leaders are the first line of defense when it comes to preventing criminal behavior from at-risk youth. These local leaders are also the ones best equipped to address youth that have already fallen into illegal activity."*

*"At the federal level, Congress has taken steps to improve the Juvenile Justice system. Since 2018, the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act has been working to set at risk youth up for long-term success. This legislation provided state and local leaders greater flexibility to meet the needs of delinquent youth in their communities and improve public safety."*

*"This legislation put in place data driven evidence-based programs, as well as important accountability and oversight measures. These reforms helped uphold our responsibility to spend taxpayer dollars wisely by ensuring the programs are living up to their stated goal—to prevent youth from falling into criminal activity."*

*"Anyone who works in this field knows that prevention is key. Youth who have had dealings with the juvenile justice system, are more likely to continue that direction. And part of that prevention is working with strong partners at the local level to help at-risk kids get on the right path. Faith-based providers are crucial partners when it comes to preventing crime and helping youth going through the juvenile justice system to stop becoming repeat offenders."*

*"There are already too many youths entangled in the juvenile justice system. In 2019, there were more than 722,000 instances of young people being detained or committed in the juvenile justice system. We can all agree this number is too high."*

*"Preventing youth from ending up in detention is imperative. We know that incarcerating youth greatly"*

*decreases their chances for a successful future. In fact, a 2015 report from an MIT economist found that incarcerated juveniles are 32 percent more likely to go to jail as an adult. Youth who have been incarcerated are also 13 to 39 percent less likely to graduate from high school.*

*“While prevention of juvenile crime is always the goal, tragically, there may be that rare occasion—often connected to some form of substance, mental, or physical abuse—where out of home placement must be considered. We must remember that taking a child who has gotten involved in criminal activity out of his or her home should not be done lightly. But in those circumstances where out of home placement does become necessary, we must ensure these facilities are safe, focused on avoiding recidivism, and giving the juvenile the chance to succeed.*

*“We all want to see our nation’s youth thrive. Every child deserves the opportunity to achieve success in life, and a second chance.”*

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